ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST California Regional Water Quality Control Board Santa Ana Region

I. BACKGROUND

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region (Regional Board), is the Lead Agency responsible for evaluating potential environmental impacts of the proposed amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Ana River Basin (Basin Plan). The proposed amendment would amend the Basin Plan to include a prohibition on the use of septic tank-subsurface disposal systems (septic systems) in the Quail Valley area of Riverside County.

The Secretary for Resources certified the basin planning process as exempt from certain requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), including preparation of an environmental impact report [Title 14, California Code of Regulations, Section 15251(g)]. However, Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Section 3777 requires that an Environmental Checklist and a written report be prepared for any proposed Basin Plan amendment. The written report must contain: (1) a brief description of the proposed activity; (2) reasonable alternatives to the proposed activity; and (3) mitigation measures to minimize any significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed activity. This Environmental Checklist and the Staff Report prepared for the Basin Plan amendment satisfy these requirements.

The Environmental Checklist is presented below.

- 1. Project title: A Basin Plan Amendment To Incorporate Waste Discharge Prohibition for the Use of Onsite Septic Tank-Subsurface Disposal Systems in the Quail Valley area of Riverside County
- 2. Project description: Most residents in Quail Valley use septic systems for disposal of sanitary wastewater. These systems are failing at an alarming rate causing public health and water quality problems. Eastern Municipal Water District is proposing to extend sewer service to Quail Valley area to enable the residents in the area to dispose of sanitary wastewater to the sewer system. A prohibition on the use of septic systems in the area is required to address the public health and water quality problems caused by the failing septic systems. Such a prohibition would require the existing septic systems to be connected to the sewer system and new developments will be prohibited the use septic systems and will also have to connect to the sewer system. Section 13280 of the California Water Code provides for amending the Basin Plan to include such a prohibition.

The project involves the adoption of a Basin Plan Amendment to prohibit the use of septic systems in Quail

Valley.

- **3. Lead agency name and address:** California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region, 3737 Main Street, Suite 500, Riverside, CA 92501-3348
- 4. Contact person and phone number: Ann Iaali (951) 320-2182
- 5. Project location: Quail Valley, an unincorporated area of Riverside County
- **6. Project sponsor's name and address:** California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Santa Ana Region, 3737 Main Street, Suite 500, Riverside, CA 92501-3348
- 7. General plan designation: Not applicable
- 8. Zoning: Residential/Mixed Residential
- 9. Surrounding land uses and setting: The area to the south/southeast of Quail Valley is the City of Canyon Lake, which is a residential community with some commercial establishments. Most of the other areas surrounding Quail Valley are vacant land. The land generally slopes towards south/southeast and the surface drains are tributary to Canyon Lake (also known as Railroad Canyon Reservoir).
- 10. Other public agencies whose approval is required: The Basin Plan amendment has to be approved by the State Water Resources Control Board, the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Administrative Law.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

Aesthetics	Agricultural Resources	Air Quality
Biological Resources	Cultural Resources	Geology/Soils
Hazards & Hazardous Materials	Hydrology / Water Quality	Land Use / Planning
Mineral Resources	Noise	Population / Housing
Public Services	Recreation	Transportation / Traffic
Utilities / Service Systems	Mandatory Findings of Sign	nificance

II. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:	
I find that the proposed project COULD NO	OT have a significant effect on the environment.
I find that the proposed project MAY have a there are feasible alternatives and/or mitigation me adverse impact. These alternatives are discussed in	
I find that the proposed project MAY have a no feasible alternatives and/or feasible mitigation is any significant adverse impact. See the attached wr	
Signature	Date
Printed Name	For

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. AESTHETICS - Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?		P		
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?				
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment that, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?				
III. AIR QUALITY - Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				

Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?				
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?				
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?		D		
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?				
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?				
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?				
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?				
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				

Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?				
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?				
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?				
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS - Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	P			
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?				
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				
iv) Landslides?				
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on-site or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?				
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?				

7

Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?				
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS - Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?				
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY - Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?				

<u>CEQN Cheeks</u>				
Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of preexisting nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?				
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on-site or off-site?		B		
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-site or off-site?				
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?				
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?				
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?				
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?				
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?				
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?				
IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING - Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?				
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the				

Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				
X. MINERAL RESOURCES - Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				
XI. NOISE - Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?				
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?				
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?				
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?				
XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING - Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				

Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				
XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection? Police protection? Schools? Parks? Other public facilities?				
XIV. RECREATION - Would the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				
XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC - Would the project:				
a) Cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?				\boxtimes
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?				
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?				

Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?				
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?				
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?		þ		
XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS - Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?				
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?				
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?				
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?				
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				
XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE -				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop				

Question	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range				
of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate				
important examples of the major periods of California history				
or prehistory?				
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ('Cumulatively considerable' means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?				\boxtimes
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				\boxtimes

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

- I. a, b, c, d. The proposed amendment will not directly impact designated scenic vistas or highways, will not have a demonstrable negative aesthetic affect, or result in increased glare.
- II. a, b, c. The proposed amendment will not impact current agricultural activities.
- III. a., b, c, d, e. The proposed amendment is not expected to adversely affect air quality, result in increased exposure to sensitive species through the air pathway or result in changes in temperature, humidity, precipitation, winds, cloudiness, or other atmospheric conditions. The elimination of failing septic systems should have some beneficial impacts, including elimination of malodor from surfacing septage.
- IV.a, b, c, d, e, f. The proposed amendment does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce fish or wildlife habitat, cause fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels or threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community. The proposed amendment is expected to reduce the amount of bacteria entering surface and groundwaters, protect public health and the beneficial uses of water resources.
- V. a., b, c, d. The proposed amendment will have no direct impact on any cultural resources.
- VI.. a., b, c, d, e . The proposed amendment would not create or exacerbate the geologic conditions outlined under these sections.
- VII. a., b, c, d, e, f, g, h. The proposed amendment is not expected to cause any significant adverse effects, hazards or cause hazardous materials to enter the environment.
- VIII. a, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j. Implementation of the proposed amendment will not adversely affect absorption rates, drainage patterns, surface runoff and flooding.
- VIII. b. The elimination of septic systems in the area will decrease the amount of water that is being recharged. There are no producing wells in the area and this impact is considered less than significant.
- IX. a., b, c. Land use and planning (e.g., general plans and zoning) delineate those areas that will be developed, and the type and density of development to be allowed. The proposed amendments should have no impact on the land use planning. However, if sewers are made available to the area because of the septic system prohibition, additional houses could be built on lots that were not suitable for septic systems.
- X. a, b. The proposed amendment does not conflict with existing energy conservation plans, waste non-renewable resources, involve or affect the extraction or availability of mineral resources.
- XI. a, b, c, d, e, f. A septic system prohibition in the area should have no significant impact on the noise level for the area.

XII. a. The proposed amendment may result in a few additional housing units on those lots that were not suitable for septic systems and if sewers become available for the area. However, the housing density, land use and other factors are not expected to change significantly.

XII. b., c. The proposed Basin Plan amendment should neither impact existing housing nor displace people.

XIII. a. The proposed amendment is not expected to impact public services for fire protection, police protection, schools or parks.

XIV. a, b. The proposed amendment will not impact recreational facilities.

XV. a, b, c, d, e, f, g. The proposed amendment is not expected to impact existing transportation or traffic circulation patterns.

XVI. a, c, d, f, g. The proposed amendment will not directly impact water utility services.

XVI. b, e. The Basin Plan amendment would require the residents in the area to connect to a sewer system. This will increase the wastewater flow to the sewage treatment plant. Eastern Municipal Water District has prepared a Quail Valley Sewer Systems Alternatives Study. The Study indicates that the septic system prohibition would have some impact on the flow and treatment capacity. However, these changes would not necessitate the construction of new sewage treatment plants.

XVII. a, b, c. No impact to these specific areas will occur as a result of the proposed amendment.